

Met Office Board

Summary

28 July 2022

Held remotely using MS Teams

- Rob Woodward (Chair) welcomed attendees and confirmed the meeting was quorate.
- James Partington (NED, BEIS Representative) had sent his apologies and David Rawlins was attending on his behalf.
- Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting.
- A short Board meeting had been held in conjunction with the Strategy Day on 14 June. The two items on the agenda were 1) the settlement of the legal case and the lessons learned exercise which would now be conducted and 2) the Met Office's response to the Civil Service Headcount Reductions Commission. Following the Strategy Day, Rob Woodward would arrange an additional session for the Non-Executive Directors to have a follow-on discussion.
- Rob Woodward thanked everyone at the Met Office for the excellent work communicating the red heat warning and predicting the record UK temperature.
- Penny Endersby (Chief Executive) presented her report. She provided feedback on the recent heatwave, noting the really accurate and early forecasts, the rapid attribution that had been made linking this to climate change, the process of issuing the warnings and the support for central government and civil contingency responders. There had been a good response from the public, 98% of whom had taken some action. She also reported on:
 - The successful planning appeal for the East Anglia radar, filling a gap in the national network.
 - The progress of the supercomputer programme and plans for 'factory acceptance testing'.
 - The action taken in relation to the two potential supplier frauds.
 - The successful launch of the new 'MetNet 2' intranet.
 - The conclusion of the process to refresh the membership of the Met Office Academic Partnership (MOAP).
 - the process for the first phase of the Arm's Length Body (ALB) Review of the Met Office which had now commenced.
- David Rawlins (BEIS representative) was pleased the Secretary of State had written to recognise the quality of work supporting the extreme heat warning. He provided an update on the considerations around association with Horizon Europe and the alternative funding plans. The Board discussed the options available and how this might impact the Met Office. He concurred with Penny Endersby's comments on the ALB Review, noting the UKRI Review had just been published.
- Simon Brown (Services Director) and Simon Vosper (Director of Science) presented the quarterly weather summary. The spring had been a relatively quiet period, whereas the summer report would cover a number of significant events and lessons to be learned. The prediction had been for a drier than normal spring and forecast accuracy metrics remained on track. Parallel Suite 45 was a major upgrade and was generally performing well, though there was an issue relating to tropical cyclones. The Board discussed the Met Office's role helping central government and emergency services understand the impact of warnings.
- Simon Brown and Albert Klein Tank (AD, Climate Science) introduced the report from the climate extremes task force. Its focus was on how, particularly as nowcasting was introduced, to get clear messages communicated over the 'last mile', for example to support responses to localised flash floods. The Board supported the proposal to create a team to address this.
- Nick Jobling presented the Finance Report which contained the first forecast for the full year. He noted the headcount position which was well down on budget given recruitment challenges. There was a risk of impact on delivery. He provided an update on the Annual Report & Accounts and the process to finalise the two outstanding issues.

- Tammy Lillie (People Director) presented the People Report. She noted the recruitment and leaver statistics, the progress on equality, diversity and inclusion objectives, and the approach to career development and talent management.
- Charlie Ewen (Chief Information Officer) and Mark Hunt (AD, Future Technology) provided an update on the supercomputer implementation programme. They explained the agreed remediations. The focus was now on the upgrade of the development system with the new chipset and the next round of factory acceptance testing. The main risk was now over contingency, which had been used up. The Board discussed the payment profile for the programme.
- Elizabeth Harris (Programmes Director) and Mark Hunt provided an update on the Supercomputer Exploitation Programme (SEP), outlining the five themes of the programme. There was a focus on affordability risks around post processing and run costs going forward. The Board discussed resourcing challenges.
- Catherine Quinn (Chair, Remuneration Committee) provided an update from the previous day's meeting which had reviewed the Chief Executive's and Chief of Science and Technology's objectives. Tammy Lillie had provided an update on the pay remit and recruitment issues and there had been a discussion on role evaluation.
- The next meeting was scheduled for 29 September 2022 near Edinburgh.